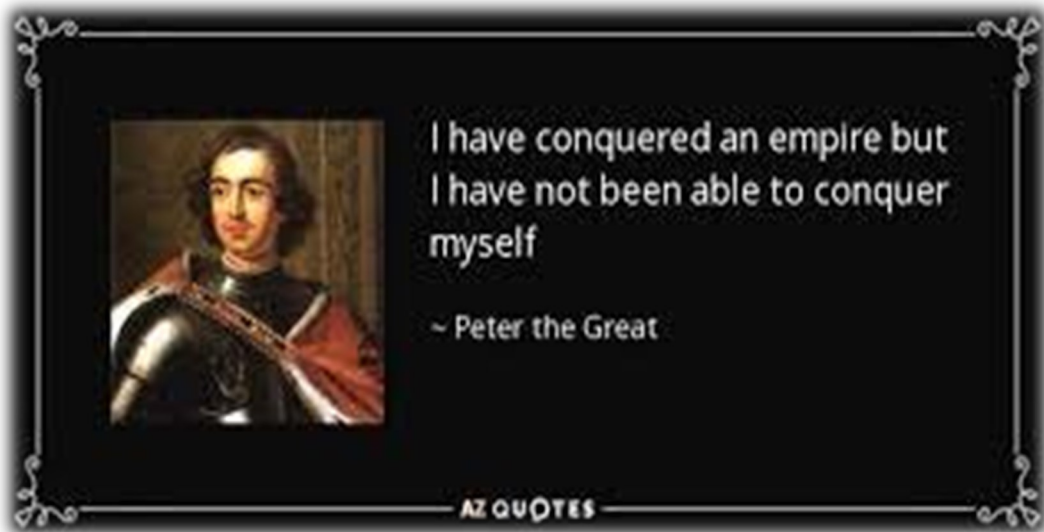


108
Greatest Of All Times



**Globally selected
Personalities**



6 Jun 1672 <::><::><::> 8 Feb 1725

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8 Feb 1725

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_the_Great

Peter I



1717 portrait by [Carel de Moor](#)

Emperor of Russia

Reign 2 November 1721 – 8 February 1725

Predecessor *Himself as* [Tsar of Russia](#)

Successor [Catherine I](#)

Tsar of all Russia

Reign 7 May 1682 – 2 November 1721

Coronation 25 June 1682

Predecessor [Feodor III](#)

Successor *Himself as* [Emperor of Russia](#)

Co-monarch [Ivan V](#) (1682–1696)

Regent [Sophia Alekseyevna](#) (1682–1689)

Born 9 June 1672
[Moscow](#)

Died 8 February 1725 (aged 52)
[Saint Petersburg](#)



Double throne in Kremlin Armoury. A large hole was cut in the back of the dual-seated throne used by Ivan and Peter. Sophia would sit behind the throne and listen as Peter conversed with nobles, while feeding him information and giving him responses to questions and problems.

Most of Peter's reign was consumed by long wars against the Ottoman and Swedish Empires. Despite initial difficulties, the wars were ultimately successful and led to expansion to the Sea of Azov and the Baltic Sea, thus laying the groundwork for the Imperial Russian Navy. His victory in the Great Northern War ended Sweden's era as a great power and was followed by the proclamation of the Russian Empire. Peter led a cultural revolution that replaced some of the traditionalist and medieval social and political systems with ones that were modern, scientific, Westernized, and based on radical Enlightenment.

In December 1699, he introduced the Julian calendar,^[6] which replaced the Byzantine calendar that was long used in Russia,^[7] but the Russian Orthodox Church was particularly resistant to this change. In 1703, he introduced the first Russian newspaper, Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti, and ordered the civil script, a reform of Russian orthography largely designed by himself. On the shores of the Neva River, he founded Saint Petersburg, a city famously dubbed by Francesco Algarotti as the "window to the West". In 1714, Peter relocated the capital from Moscow to St. Petersburg, a status it retained until 1918.

Peter had a great interest in plants, animals and minerals, in malformed creatures or exceptions to the [law of nature](#) for his [cabinet of curiosities](#). He encouraged research of deformities, all along trying to debunk the superstitious fear of [monsters](#). He promoted [industrialization in the Russian Empire](#) and higher education. The [Russian Academy of Sciences](#) and the [Saint Petersburg State University](#) were founded in 1724, and invited [Christian Wolff](#) and [Willem 's Gravesande](#).

Peter is primarily credited with the modernization of the country, quickly transforming it into a major European power. His administrative reforms, creating a [Governing Senate](#) in 1711, the [Collegium](#) in 1717 and the [Table of Ranks](#) in 1722 had a lasting impact on Russia, and many institutions of the [Russian government](#) trace their origins to his reign.

@@@@@@@@@@@@@@

Profile

Peter the Great

{https://www.worldhistory.org/Peter_the_Great/}

Peter I of Russia (**Peter the Great**) was the **Tsar** of Russia from 1682-1721 and Emperor of Russia from 1721-1725. During his long reign, Peter had absolute power and brought real change to Russia, including building its first navy, introducing industrialisation, establishing educational institutions and creating the new Russian capital, St. Petersburg.

Peter loved learning from foreigners, especially during his long trip to Western **Europe** (the Grand Embassy). This trip allowed him to modernise Russia and put it on equal footing with other powerful and modern European nations.

Childhood & Education

Peter was born in Moscow on 30 May 1672. He was the son of Tsar Alexis (1629-1676) and his second wife Natalya Kirillovna Naryshkina (1651-1694). Although he was the third son of Tsar Alexis, his birth was welcomed with much fanfare as his older half-brothers, Feodor (1661-1682) and Ivan (1666-1696), were both sickly and weak. As thanks for his healthy birth, the Tsaritsa's family were given honours and rose in rank. Peter was christened on 29 June, **Saint Peter**'s feast day in the Russian Orthodox Church.

As a child, Peter was surrounded by luxury and was looked after by a governess, a wet nurse, and a staff of playmates and companions who obeyed his every whim. Peter was educated by Nikita Zotov (1644-1717), who told him epic stories of Russia's past. Zotov made such an impression on Peter that they remained lifelong friends, and Peter swore he would return Russia to its former glory if he became tsar.

Tsar Alexis died in January 1676, passing his crown to his oldest surviving son, Feodor, who was only 14. Feodor treated Peter and his mother kindly, perhaps because Peter was too young to pose any real risk to his rule. Feodor died in 1682, but at the time, there was no formal succession **law** in Russia, with the most common rule being that the oldest son would succeed the tsar. However, Feodor died without heirs, so both Peter and Ivan became contenders for the throne. Although Ivan was older, he was also lame and almost blind, and the boyars (the highest form of nobility in Eastern Europe) generally preferred Peter. The nobles also knew that a regent would hold the real power, and they favoured Peter's foster grandfather, Artamon Matveyev (1625-1682), over Ivan's relative, Ivan Miloslavsky (d. 1681).

After the nobles had farewelled Tsar Feodor, it was decided that the people would choose who would become tsar next. Patriarch Joachim went out to the staircase overlooking Cathedral Square and asked the public who should become the next tsar. It was not long before the cries of support for Peter overtook the support for Ivan, and Peter was proclaimed tsar at only ten years old. At first, Peter refused to accept the title as he believed himself to be too young, but he soon complied.

The Streltsy Revolt

Certain powerful people were unhappy with the new tsar, namely Princess Sophia (1657-1704), Peter's half-sister, who believed that Ivan should have been named tsar instead. Unlike most Russian princesses, Sophia was in the public eye, educated and outspoken, which made her a real threat. At Feodor's funeral, Sophia made a scene, causing Peter and Natalya to make a hasty retreat; this in itself caused criticism.

One of the key players in Russian politics and power was the Streltsy (Russia's first professional soldiers), who guarded the Russian government and royals. They were supported by the tsar, who paid for their food and housing. In May 1682, Sophia's supporters went to the Streltsy and claimed that Peter and his family had killed Ivan. That was all it took for revolt to break out. The Streltsy marched on the **Kremlin** to accuse Peter and his family of being traitors and murderers.

Natalya was told to show Peter and Ivan to the public so they could see with their own eyes that both boys were alive and well. The Streltsy were confused but stood down after Matveyev (a former Streltsy commander) assured them that all was well. The son of the Streltsy commander, Prince Michael Dolgoruky, foolishly chose this time to berate the Streltsy and take military control. This caused another uproar that resulted in many people being killed, including Matveyev and Natalya's brother Afanasy, with the slain bodies being put on public display.

However, the main target of the Streltsy was Natalya's brother Ivan, who they believed poisoned Feodor and plotted to take the throne. Sophia advised Natalya that turning in her brother would be the only way to save themselves. Natalya knew she was right and summoned Ivan, who then turned himself in. After he was tortured and killed, the Streltsy were satisfied that all the traitors had been dealt with. The Streltsy Revolt had

a lasting impact on Peter, changing how he viewed Moscow, the Russian Orthodox Church, and everything that came with being a royal.

On May 23, 1682, the Streltsy demanded that Peter and Ivan become co-tsars and have a joint rule. The boyars agreed to this request to avoid further bloodshed. On 29 May, a further appeal was made that Sophia become regent. On 6 July, the coronation of Peter and Ivan took place. This coronation was the first time in European history that two male rulers of equal status had been crowned at the same time. During the years of Sophia's regency, Peter and Ivan fulfilled their formal duties. However, for the most part, Peter enjoyed a stress-free childhood.

Regiments & Navy

Peter's education was an unconventional one for a young tsar. He learnt from building things and exploring the outdoors, while his formal education fell by the wayside. One of his favourite ways to pass the time was to play **war** games. He and his playmates formed military schools where they studied the ways of the military, lived like soldiers and built things. As he grew older, he began to take his games more seriously and ordered weapons. He was well aware that one day, he would rule Russia and need to protect it from its enemies. Peter formed the Preobrazhensky Regiment (the first regiment of the Russian Imperial Guard) and the Semyonovsky Regiment.

At 15, Peter heard about an instrument that could measure distances without moving. He asked Prince Yakov Dolgoruky (c. 1667-1746) to bring one back from **Paris** after his diplomatic mission there. There was only one problem: nobody knew how to use an **astrolabe**. They were pointed in the direction of Franz Timmermann, a Dutch merchant who was living in Russia. Timmermann became a close friend of Peter and fuelled his interest in learning geography, geometry and arithmetic.

In June 1688, Peter and Timmermann were walking around an old estate at Ismailovo when Peter asked for a storehouse to be opened. There lay a boat unlike any he had ever seen in Russia. Timmermann informed him that it was an English boat. Peter was amazed that this boat could sail even against the wind and ordered for it to be repaired so he could study it closely. Another Dutchman, Karsten Brandt, fixed the boat. Peter learned how to sail, soon becoming obsessed with his newfound hobby. Peter was determined to build his own navy of ships and set up a shipbuilding operation on the shores of Lake Pleshev. Thus began his lifelong love of the sea.

Marriage & Sophia's Downfall

Before too long, Natalya had called Peter back to Moscow, where it was decided that it was time for him to get married. The marriage took place on 27 January 1689. His bride, Eudoxia Lopukhina (1669-1731), was three years older than Peter, shy, and came from a good, conservative family. It was clear that Peter and Eudoxia were ill-matched from the beginning. Peter was lively and adventurous, while Eudoxia was fearful, uneducated, and overly aware of her husband's title to the point that she was deferential. Despite all this, the couple had three sons together: Alexis (1690-1718), **Alexander** (1691-1692), and **Paul** (1693-1693), although only Alexis survived into adulthood.

Peter barely waited for his honeymoon to be over before he was racing back to his shipbuilding; however, Natalya soon called him back to Moscow as tensions were rising in Sophia's administration. Now that Peter had come of age and was married, Sophia knew her position as regent was perilous. Peter refused to acknowledge Sophia's lover

and first minister, Prince Vasily Golitsyn (1643-1714), and on 18 July 1689, their tension was put on public display at the celebration of the miraculous appearance of the icon of Our Lady of Kazan after Peter attempted to remove Sophia from the procession. When she refused, Peter left instead and returned to the countryside.

In August 1689, Peter learnt that Sophia was assembling a large number of Streltsy and was falsely informed that she was marching against him. Remembering the horrific bloodshed that took place seven years earlier, Peter fled to the **Trinity** Lavra of St. Sergius, as it was a strong fortress and one of the holiest places in all of Russia.

Peter summoned the Streltsy colonels to make their way to the monastery. Sophia threatened them and forbade them to go. She instead sent Patriarch Joachim to meet with Peter. This meeting was a mistake, as the Patriarch quickly took Peter's side. Sophia set out for the monastery herself but was convinced to turn back to Moscow. Now desperate, Sophia pled with her supporters and bribed them to keep their allegiance. Meanwhile, Peter ordered all the foreign ministers to come to his side, signalling the real end of Sophia's regency. The Streltsy in Moscow demanded that Sophia give up her close confidant and diplomat, Fyodor Shaklovity (d. 1689), which she reluctantly did, knowing it was the only way to save her life. Sophia was sent to Novodevichy Convent, where she died in 1704.

Peter reluctantly returned to Moscow in October 1689. At just 17 years old, he was already an impressive figure at over 2 meters (nearly 7 ft) tall. Peter was more interested in continuing his education and learning from foreigners than governing Russia. Much to the disapproval of the Patriarch, Peter spent more time in the Foreign Quarter, where he met the Scotsman General Patrick Gordon (1635-1699), and the Swiss adventurer Francis Lefort (1656-1699). Both these men were fascinating to Peter, and they soon became close confidantes and statesmen. It was through Lefort that Peter met his mistress of ten years, Anna Mons (1672-1714), a German woman. Over time, Peter's companions, who were made up of an interesting mix of foreigners, soldiers, boyars and adventurers, became known as the Jolly Company. They went everywhere with Peter and often held lavish banquets.

The Jolly Company

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Azov Campaigns

Russia was effectively at war with the **Ottoman Empire**, however, it was under pressure from Austria and Poland to do more. Peter saw this as his dream come true; finally, he could go to war for real. In 1695, he and his regiments moved towards the Turkish fortress Azov. Peter was confident that his men would easily be able to defeat the Turkish

forces, but he soon learnt that there was a huge difference between playing war games and taking part in a real one.

Two battles took place in August 1695, and the Russians were unsuccessful in both. To make matters worse, there was a divide among the commanders. Peter had his men retreat north and planned to return the following year. Back in Moscow, Peter got to work building a new fleet of ships. Tsar Ivan died in January 1696, leaving Peter the sole ruler of Russia. Later that year, Peter and his men returned to the fortress of Azov, this time with almost double the number of men (including Cossack raiders) and with over 40 ships. The Russians started a siege, but the Turks soon surrendered, and Azov became a Russian town. This campaign was the first time since the reign of Tsar Alexis that a Russian army had been successful in **battle**.

The Grand Embassy

In 1697, Peter and a large number of ambassadors travelled throughout Western Europe for 18 months in what is known as 'The Grand Embassy'. There is much speculation over the true purpose of this trip, but Peter himself had engraved a seal with the inscription "I am a pupil and need to be taught", making many view it as an excursion to further his education. Peter travelled incognito and only revealed his true identity to certain people. The **Grand Embassy of Peter the Great** visited Sweden, Livonia (modern-day Latvia and Estonia), Germany, Holland (the Netherlands), **England**, Austria, and Poland.

During his travels, he met with royals, including **William III of England** (the Prince of Orange) (1650-1702), a man whom Peter had long admired, Prince George of Denmark (1653-1708), Leopold I, Holy **Roman Emperor** (1640-1705), and **Augustus** II of Saxony (1670-1733). He also met with religious leaders in England, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Sophia Charlotte, the Electress of Brandenburg, and her mother, the Electress of Hanover. Both **women** admired him and his handsome looks but confessed that his manners were a little rustic.

Peter's Reforms

Peter returned to Moscow feeling inspired by what he saw in Europe and decided that change must come to Russia. His first goal was the elimination of long beards, with anyone wanting to have a beard having to pay a tax. He also remodelled the Russian army by creating new regiments and introducing a new modern military uniform. He appointed an ecclesiastic who would take over the church's administration and became the supreme head of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Peter developed various industries such as textiles, leatherwork, and weapon making (cannons and muskets) so that Russia would be less reliant on international **trade**. He sent Russian artists to **Italy** and the Netherlands to study and established the Museum of the Academy of **Science**. One of Peter's longest-lasting legacies is the Academy of Science (Russian Academy of Sciences) and the Saint Petersburg State University, both of which remain Russia's top educational institution to this day.

Peter made peace with **Turkey** (the Treaty of Carlowitz) in 1699 and turned his attention towards the Baltic Sea. However, there was one small problem: the Baltic Sea was under Sweden's control. Peter declared war on Sweden and King Charles XII (1682-1718) – the Great Northern War would last for 21 years (1700-1721). One of the most notable battles was the Battle of Narva in 1700. The Russians put up a fierce fight but were ultimately defeated. Peter was not discouraged, however, and continued his war. The Battle of

Poltava in 1709 marked the most significant and decisive battle of the conflict. King Charles XII had moved on Poltava, a small town in Ukraine and took it under siege. The Russians, now a strong and proud army, defeated the Swedish, taking revenge for the Battle of Narva nine years earlier.

Over the years, many battles and campaigns were fought, with the war only coming to an end with King Charles XII's **death** in 1718 and the Treaty of Nystad (1720-1721). Following his victory, Peter took the title of Russian emperor.

The Foundation of St. Petersburg

The establishment of St. Petersburg was purely by chance. At first, Peter wanted a fortress to guard the River Neva. In May 1703, he started constructing the new fortress and port and called it St. Petersburg. Peter kept expanding this new building project, and soon, it developed into something much more than just a fortress on a river.

Peter & Catherine

After divorcing Eudoxia in 1698, Peter was free to marry again. He married Marta Skavronskaya (later Catherine I of Russia, l. 1684-1727), who came from a peasant family in Lithuania. She was employed in the household of Prince Menshikov (1673-1729) when she was spotted by Peter, who was instantly drawn to her. She was transferred to Peter's household staff, and they married secretly in 1707, only making their marriage public in 1712.

Together they had twelve children, with only two surviving into adulthood: Anna (1708-1728) and the future Empress Elizabeth (1709-1762). After Peter died without naming any heirs, Catherine was named empress.

Legacy

Peter the Great died on 28 January 1725, after suffering from illness during the last weeks of his life. Some view his autocratic reign with criticism, and others see it as a golden period in Russian history. However, there is no denying that Peter was passionate about improving Russia. Without hesitation, he threw himself into new opportunities he believed would benefit Russia. Although some would view his actions as reckless at times, it is admirable that he personally took part in every new venture instead of simply ordering other people to do his bidding. His legacy is best preserved in the grand city of St. Petersburg and the educational institutions he founded.



Grand Duchess Sofia



Peter the Great meditating the idea of building of St Petersburg

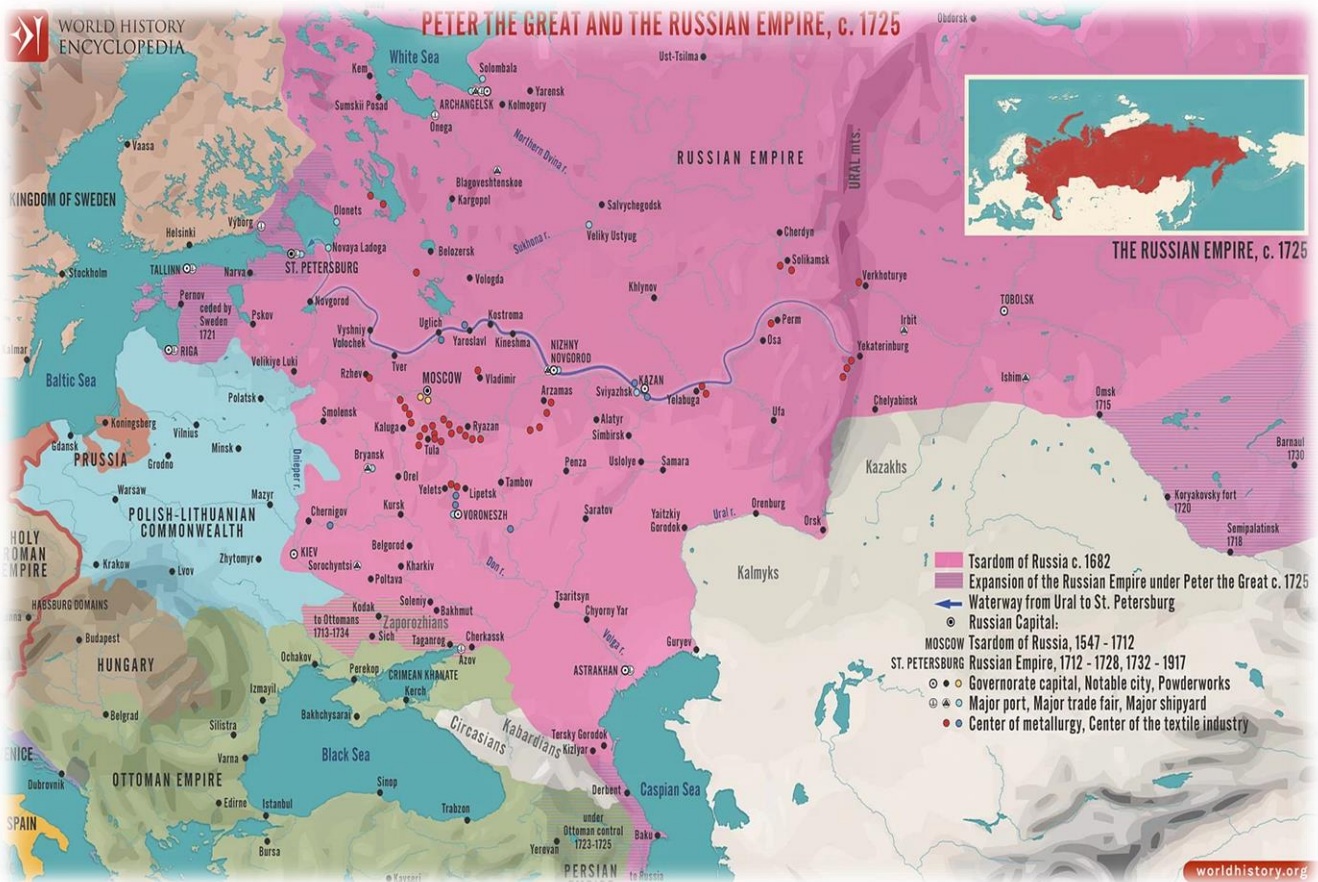


Peter the Great on his deathbed

(☺)(☺)aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa(☺)(☺)

Russian Empire

<https://www.worldhistory.org/image/17891/peter-the-great-and-the-russian-empire-c-1725/>



Russian Empire c.1725

A map illustrating the state and expansion of the Russian Empire, c. 1725, during the reign of Peter I Alekseyevich (commonly known as Peter the Great), a ruler of Russia who started as a Russian Tsar in 1682, only to become the first Emperor of all Russia in 1721. His reign is a pivotal point in Russian history not only for his aggressively expansionist policies but also for the reorganization of the Russian army along Western standards, creating a robust competitive navy, the secularization of schools, limiting the power of the Orthodox Church, and restructuring the country along new administrative and territorial divisions.

(☺)aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa(☺)

Ottoman Empire

https://www.worldhistory.org/Ottoman_Empire/

The Ottoman Sultanate (1299-1922 as an **empire**; 1922-1924 as **caliphate** only), also referred to as Turkish as *Osmanlı* state that was Osman (l. 1258-1326), in the 16th and 17th vast stretches southwestern **Europe**, parts of northern Iraq, parts of the Arabian North African strip, in major **Mediterranean** islands of **Rhodes**, **Cyprus**, and **Crete**. Renowned the strongest military superpower of its time, the empire stagnated and faced prolonged decline from the late 16th century CE onwards until it was replaced by the modern Republic of **Turkey** after the First World **War** (1914-1918).



the **Ottoman Empire**, written in *Devleti*, was a Turkic imperial conceived by and named after an Anatolian chieftain. At its peak centuries, the empire controlled including **Anatolia**, mainland **Greece**, the Balkans, Azerbaijan, **Syria**, **Palestine**, Peninsula, **Egypt**, and parts of the addition to the

Rise, Zenith & Fall of the Ottoman Empire

In the 11th century, the Seljuk Turks, a people from the Asian steppe who had accepted the Sunni version of **Islam**, swept over **Persia** and neighboring eastern territories and then advanced westwards towards Anatolia. There, they dealt the imperial forces of the **Byzantine Empire** (330-1453) a devastating defeat near Manzikert in 1071, and henceforth several Turkic tribes settled the region. By the end of the 13th century, the various Anatolian *beyliks* (petty kingdoms) were virtually independent but feuding amongst each other. Osman (r. 1299-1326), the *bey* (chieftain) of Bithynia, a region situated westwards, near the Sea of Marmara, initiated a war with the bordering **Byzantine** realm, expanding his domains at their expense and laying siege to Prusa (Bursa) which fell after his **death** in 1326.

Osman's successors swept over the Byzantine holdings in Anatolia and Europe, even taking over the Balkans by the close of the 14th century. The Europeans made vehement attempts to fight off the Ottomans but they failed, most notably at the pivotal battles of Kosovo (1389) and Nicopolis (1396). The Turks met their match, not from the west but the east, when they clashed with the rival Timurid forces (over a territorial conflict in Anatolia) under the Turko-**Mongol** leader Timur (aka Tamerlane, r. 1370-1405) near Ankara in 1402. The Ottomans were defeated, and Sultan Bayezid I (r. 1389-1402) was captured.

However, the western powers failed to exploit this opportunity to its fullest, and after a civil war, otherwise known as the Ottoman Interregnum (1402-1413), Mehmed I (r. 1413-1421), a son of Bayezid, emerged victorious as the unrivaled ruler of the unified Ottoman realm, and for this, he is often dubbed as the second founder of the empire. Having

restored the empire's borders as they were before the **Battle** of Ankara, the Ottomans appeared before the legendary **Theodosian Walls** of **Constantinople**, the last bastion of the Byzantine Empire, in 1453, under **Mehmed II** the Conqueror (r. 1451-1481, a grandson of Mehmed I).



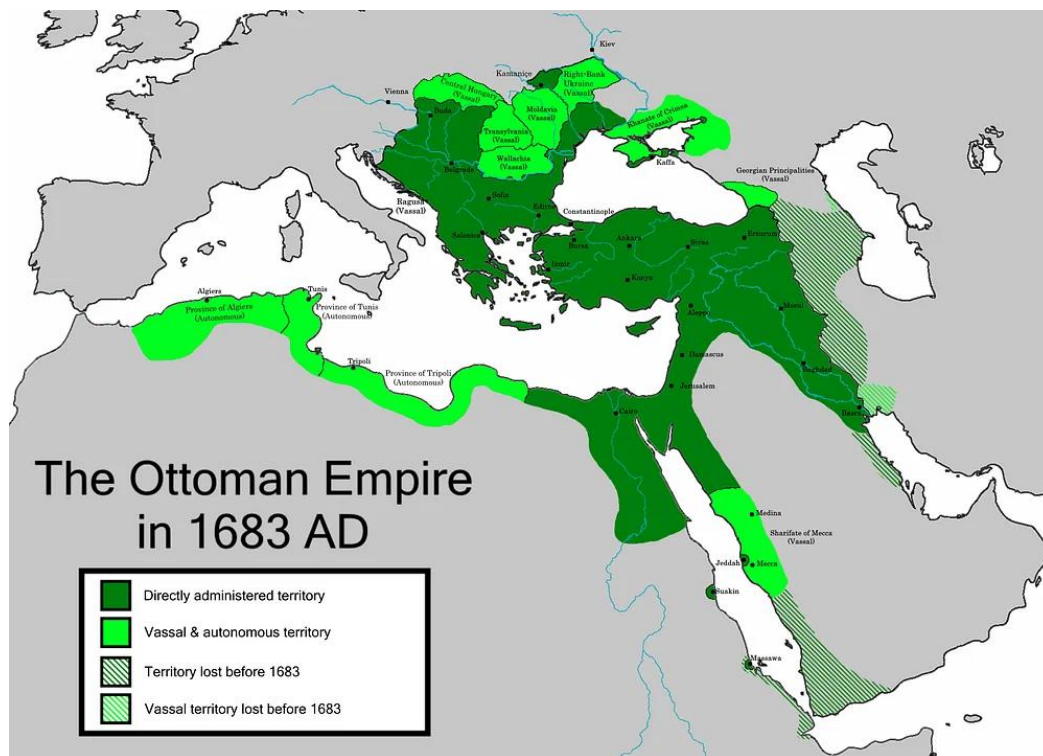
Mehmed II Conquers Constantinople

After the fall of Constantinople, which became the new Ottoman capital, Mehmed launched several military campaigns in both the east and the west. Serbia, Greece, and Bosnia fell under the sultan's sway, and in the east, Mehmed took **Trebizond** (Trabzon) in 1461. Mehmed also received the allegiance of the Crimean Tatars (1441-1783) in 1475, and hence secured the domination of the Black Sea region for three centuries to come.

The Ottomans turned eastwards under Selim I (r. 1512-1520, **Mehmed the Conqueror**'s grandson) who targeted the rival Safavid (Shia) Dynasty of Iran (1501-1736) and the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt (1250-1517). He dealt a pulverizing defeat to the former in 1514 but did not pursue a complete **conquest**; the Mamluk realm, however, was engulfed in its entirety by 1517.

The latter victory gave the Ottomans access to the Islamic holy **cities** of Mecca, Medina, and **Jerusalem**, allowing them to claim the title of Caliph of the Islamic world. The Ottomans and Safavids, and successive Persian empires, would continue to clash intermittently for the next three centuries, and the territories in Iraq and Azerbaijan would exchange hands several times until the matters were finally resolved with a peace treaty in 1847.

Selim's son **Suleiman I** (r. 1520-1566) remains the most celebrated ruler of the Ottoman era and is referred to as *Kanuni* (Lawgiver) in the east and the Magnificent in the west. He conquered Belgrade in 1521, took the island of Rhodes in 1523, and secured a major and consequential victory against Hungary at the Battle of Mohács in 1526 (which destabilized the region for years to come, and allowed the Turks to assert their dominion over it, competing the Austrians in doing so). In **Africa**, Algiers had accepted Selim's suzerainty in 1517, and Tunis entered Ottoman rule under Suleiman in 1534.



The Greatest Extent of the Ottoman Empire in Europe [1683 CE]

Suleiman the Magnificent died whilst campaigning in Hungary in 1566, leaving the empire in the hands of his only surviving son Selim II (r. 1566-1574), and some historians claim that this was the start of the Ottoman decline. The following decades were not devoid of conquests but the military and naval authority of the empire began to wither. The conquests of Yemen (1567-1570), Cyprus (1570), Tunis (1574), Fez in Morocco (1578), Crete (1669), and Podolia in modern-day Ukraine (1672) proved to be the last major additions to the Ottoman realm. In 1683, the Ottoman army faced a devastating defeat at the walls of Vienna and, consequently, lost its military prestige. In 1699, the Ottoman Empire was forced to sue for peace in the face of a collective invasion; the treaty of Karlowitz (1699) forced the Turks to give up vast swaths of European territory to Austria, Poland, Russia, and Venice.

This territorial loss was merely a prelude for a century-long episode to come. The Tatars of Crimea were defeated by the Russians in 1783, hence cutting off the empire's hegemony in the Eastern Black Sea region. The **Greek** Revolution (1821-1829) established Greek independence, and their example was followed by Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro, and Romania, all of whom broke away from the empire by the end of the 19th century CE. Egypt escaped direct Ottoman control as early as the 1830s and was eventually lost for good to the British Empire five decades later in the 1880s. France

seized Algeria in 1830 and Tunis in 1881, and the last Ottoman-held African territory, Libya fell to **Italy** in 1911.

The last autonomous Ottoman ruler to have made any significant contributions to the empires was Sultan Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876-1909) who took the scepter amidst the First Constitutional Era of the Ottoman Empire (1876-1878; an era of constitutional monarchy), which he put an end to in just two years, reasserting absolute monarchical control. Hamid made vehement attempts at modernization (most notably in the education sector) and introduced several technological advancements such as laying down extensive railway systems but remains controversial due to his involvement in the massacre of local Armenian population (1894-1896; also known as the Hamidian massacres), which are often seen as a prelude to the Armenian genocide (1914-1923) that happened later on.

Abdul Hamid was deposed in 1909 by the Young Turks party, a nationalistic and secular political entity which restored constitutional monarchy in the empire, also known as the Second Constitutional Era of the Ottoman Empire (1908-1920). However, from that point onwards, the sultans became mere figureheads and the empire had started on the course of its destruction. The final nail was struck in the coffin of the empire when it became involved in the First World War (1914-1918) on the Central Powers' side (Austro-Hungarian Empire and Germany). The Sultanate was destroyed by the war and officially ceased to exist by 1922.

In the aftermath of the war, the Greek army invaded Anatolia, taking Smyrna (Izmir) and moving inland. The Greek invasion force was pushed back by Turkish freedom fighters, led by the Turkish nationalist leader and the founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal (r. 1923-1938), during what was later termed as the Turkish War of Independence (r. 1919-1923). The last Ottoman leader, Abdulmejid II (r. 1922-1924) served only as the Caliph of Islam (symbolically) for two years, until the office was officially abolished by Kemal.

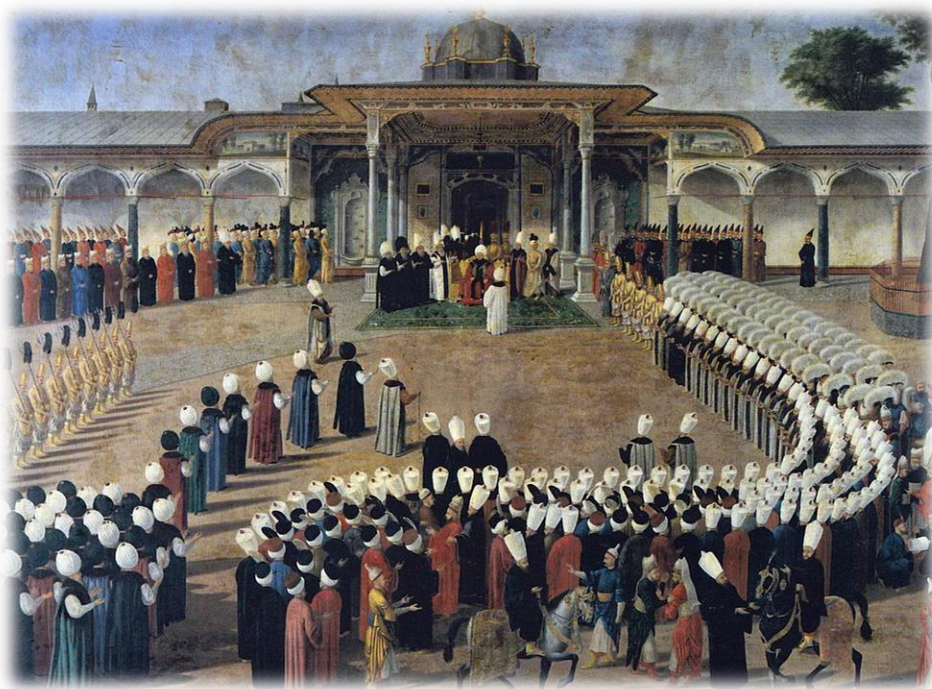
Ottoman Government

From the time of Murad I (r. 1362-1389), the leader of the Ottoman State was called sultan, often understood as a religiously inspired warrior king. The title of the sultan was used by several monarchs of the Islamic world in medieval times, and in many cases, further legitimized by the blessings of the spiritual leader of the Muslim community, the caliph (*Khalifa* in Arabic). The sultan, though in theory a subordinate to the caliph, was practically independent and in most cases more authoritative.

The sultan's actions and decisions were considered final, although there was an advisory body of viziers (ministers; also known as *paşa* or pasha) to assist, and in times even replace the sultan in political affairs. These ministers and several other high-ranking bureaucrats were selected from promising officers of the elite Jannisary military corps conscripted from the conquered Balkans territory. The grand vizier (prime minister) was the direct subordinate of the sultan and in many cases proved instrumental in asserting the latter's authority, as exemplified by the members of the Köprülü family who served the office in succession from 1656 to 1703.

Although the sultan was the unrivaled ruler of the realm, the Ottomans allowed local rulers to retain their autonomy in return for fealty, and in several cases, the locals would retain their system of governance, such as in the Balkans. The Ottoman administrative framework can be perfectly surmised from the following extract:

Paradoxically the early Ottoman state was both militantly Islamic and strongly influenced by Greek culture, heir to the Saljuqs (Seljuks) but also to practices and structures derived from the Roman-Byzantine Empire it replaced. Straddling the Christian Balkans and the western reaches of Dar al-Islam, it was a bridge between rival civilizations. (Ruthven, 86)



Selim III receiving Dignitaries

The biggest flaw in the Ottoman sovereignty framework was that of succession; the Ottomans followed somewhat of a Darwinian principle: only the most capable prince could take the throne. The princes, known as *Şehzade*, were expected to serve as governors of various regions under their father's suzerainty to gain military and administrative experience, however, this practice was forsaken in later years, as it created competition for a claimant and hence invited fratricide.

From the time of Selim II (r. 1566-1574), as the sultans submitted to the pleasures of the harem and distanced themselves from the administration of their realm, corruption, intolerance, and nepotism began to plague the framework. Potential successors were left inept without any practical experience, allowing other parties (ministers, janissaries, or queens) to assert more control over the sultan, who then became pawns in palace intrigues. For a brief period in the 17th century CE, mother queens (*Valide Sultan*), began asserting direct control over minor sovereigns, as exemplified by the rule of Kosem Sultan (r. 1623-1632 & r. 1648-1651), after the death of her husband, Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603-1617).

Later sultans made vehement attempts to solidify the empire, and Sultan Abdulmejid I (r. 1839-1861) introduced a list of important reforms known as the *Tanzimat* (1839-1876; originally conceived by his father Mahmud II). These reforms offered many rights such as equality and religious tolerance for all while also overhauled the financial structure of the empire, promoted Ottoman nationalism in contrast to ethnic divisions, limited the role of unruly factions, and undermined the authority of all anti-state conspirators.

However, secular nationalists were unimpressed by the *Tanzimat* reforms and wished to create a more European-style government. They gave rise to the First Constitutional Era of the Ottoman Empire (1876-1878) which lasted only for the first two years of Abdul Hamid's reign. There was no party system but the elected members of the Ottoman parliament were deemed as the representatives of the people and asserted some degree of control over the Sultan until he put an end to the era.

Hamid, who was opposed to liberal reforms, was deposed in 1909, and hence the Second Constitutional Era of the Ottoman Empire (1908-1920) commenced. This time around, the sultans became mere figureheads placed by the ruling *pashas* (ministers), who took over the reins of power, most prominently the trio that served amidst the First World War, namely Mehmed Talat Pasha, Enver Pasha, and Ahmed Cemal Pasha of the Young Turks party, also known as the "Three Pashas" (and who are considered responsible for the Armenian Genocide of 1914-1923).

Religion

Islam remained a defining factor for the empire; the sultan was expected to protect the people of that faith and Islam itself - blasphemous remarks were not tolerated. However, as historian Stephen Turnbull comments,

...the Christians under Muslim rule seem to have enjoyed a greater toleration than was shown to the Orthodox under Latin domination, so resistance was not always as fierce as may have been assumed. Churches might be turned into mosques, while those left in Christian hands suffered certain restrictions such as at the prohibition of bell ringing and public processions, but matters could've been much worse. The Orthodox world had the tragic memory of the **Fourth Crusade** of 1204 CE to remind them of how well off they were under Ottoman rule by comparison with a western conquest. 'Better the Sultan's turban than the bishop's mitre' wrote one Byzantine scholar. (75-76)

An instance of religious inclusion and acceptance can be stated from the time of Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512) who welcomed the Spanish Jews in 1492, in stark contrast to the mistreatment of Jews rampant throughout medieval Europe. Mehmed the Conqueror went so far as to write a declaration offering the Christian clerics complete protection and religious independence.

However, instances of extremism and intolerance on religious, ethnic or nationalistic basis also abound the annals of Turkish history such as the violent butchery of war captives pioneered by Bayezid I (r. 1389-1402) after the **Battle of Nicopolis** (1396), the plundering of conquered cities, and the maltreatment and genocide of local Armenians from the late 19th to early 20th century.

Ottoman Military

The founder of the empire, Osman, branded himself as a *ghazi*, meaning holy warrior, and led forces majorly composed of such holy warriors, waging *gazā*, a form of holy war, against the Byzantines. As the Ottoman realm expanded, new military corps were incorporated into the growing Turkish army. Raider cavalry called the *akincis* (*akin* - raid) was often employed to scout and launch preemptive raids in the enemy's territory before the main army arrived. The *sipahis* were the elite Ottoman heavy cavalry units, well-armed and equipped with lances, who were paid with land instead of salaries.



Ottoman Sipahi Cavalry

The light infantry was mostly composed of irregular *azap(s)* (meaning unmarried or bachelor, which they were), who were equipped with both melee and ranged weapons. However, the most iconic Ottoman (heavy) infantry units were recruited via the *devşirme* (meaning child levy) system, laid down by Sultan Murad I, by which children from the Balkans were conscripted, converted to Islam and trained as elite janissary soldiers (Turkish: *yeñiçeri*, meaning new soldier), some of whom would also serve as ministers and leading bureaucrats of the realm.

The janissaries served as both heavy infantry and cavalry units, although they are mostly famous for the former. Their resilience and skill won them the admiration and dread of European powers, for instance, they were largely responsible for the Ottoman victory against a European Crusader coalition army at Varna (1444). The janissaries were innovative in that they wore official uniforms and were equipped with gunpowder weapons like arquebuses, which often helped them turn the tide of battle.

The Ottomans were famous for the incorporation of gunpowder weapons, including light and heavy cannons; the latter being exemplified by the massive Dardanelles Gun (*Şahi topu*), a prototype of which was also deployed before the walls of Constantinople in 1453. The Ottoman army also pioneered the use of an official military band, known as the *mehterân*, who played war tunes (and several imperial anthems) of which many songs are famous even to this day.

This military structure, though initially quite successful, gradually eroded as no attempts were made at modernizing or reforming the forces. The janissaries ascended the power ladder, at the expense of the sultans, alienating other military orders, which took to brigandage, such as the *Celali* revolts (1590-1610; named after an early albeit unrelated Shia rebel) that raged throughout the empire's core and took decades to completely subdue. Meanwhile, external foes started gaining a military edge. Selim III (r. 1789-1807) introduced the *Nizam-i-Cedid* (New Order), a reformed military system, which could potentially replace the obsolete janissaries. This move was met with stiff resistance by the janissaries, who forced the sultan to abandon his efforts and ultimately took his life.

Mahmud II (r. 1808-1839) realized that the survival of the fragmenting empire could only be preserved with a new army, and he thenceforth set upon emulating Selim's example. He trained modern troops, who pledged absolute loyalty to the house of Osman, and in turn, these soldiers destroyed the janissaries when they rebelled, reasserting the sultan's authority in 1826. They were branded as *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye* (The Victorious Soldiers of **Muhammad**), often shortened as Mansure Army (Victorious Army).

The Ottomans were also famous for valuing talent, even in their enemies, for instance, they recruited corsairs and pirates, who raided their ships, amidst their ranks, turning foe into a friend. Two of most notable examples are that of Hayreddin Barbarossa (l. 1478-1546), the victor of the naval battle of Preveza (1538), and Yusuf Raïs (l. 1553-1622), originally named Jack Birdy, and possibly the inspiration for Captain Sparrow's character in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series. The Ottoman navy, which was first commissioned on a titanic scale by Suleiman the Magnificent, dominated the Mediterranean, in rivalry to other European naval powers, most notably Venice, until its defeat at the Battle of Lepanto (1571). The vestiges of Ottoman naval power waned from the 17th century onwards due to the friction in modernization and lack of funds to support a stronger and bigger fleet.



Nizam-e Cedid Troops

Economy & Trade

The fall of Constantinople in 1453 was not only the start of advanced Ottoman imperial ambitions but also secured trade domination of the area for the Turks. Since the Tatars of Crimea had sworn fealty to the sultan, Mehmed II also held the hegemony in the Black Sea area. With the Dardanelles under their control, the Turks closed the historical **Silk Road** for their western foes. Exclusive trade rights with Mughal **India** (r. 1526-1857, intermittently), a regional superpower, via the Indian Ocean also brought in heaps of revenue for both empires, and the European merchants who did use the Ottoman-controlled routes were bound to pay taxes to the empire.

Ottoman hegemony in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, and their control of the Dardanelles, forced rival European powers to seek new trade routes, westwards, into the New World. However, the Turks soon lost that edge in the east, as explained by historian Mehrdad Kia:

The economic and financial decline of the empire was exacerbated by the significant diversion of trade from traditional land routes to new sea routes. Historically, the vast region extending from Central Asia to the Middle East served as a land bridge between **China** and Europe. The taxes and the custom charges collected by the Ottoman government constituted an important component of the revenue generated by the state... The Portuguese rounding of the Cape of Good Hope and subsequent establishment of a direct sea route to Iran, India, and beyond, however, allowed European states and merchants to bypass Ottoman held territory... (12)

Ottoman Era Art & Architecture

Architectural masterpieces from the Ottoman era have dazzled and mesmerized visitors for centuries. The Ottoman architecture draws heavily from Persian, Byzantine, and Arabic styles, intermingling the three to create a unique blend, perfectly embodied in their designs for *masjids* or mosques of which several were commissioned by the sultans as they are central to the Islamic belief. Madrassas (religious schools), soup kitchens, hospitals, universities, sultans' tombs are also perfect examples of Turkish architectural mastery.



The Suleymaniye Mosque, Istanbul

Mimar Sinan (l. 1488/1490-1588), a prominent Ottoman architect, served under Suleiman the Magnificent and his two successors and rivaled the excellence of **Michelangelo** (l. 1475-1564). Sinan was responsible for designing masterpieces like Suleymaniye Mosque (inaugurated in 1557) and Selimiye Mosque (inaugurated in 1575); one of his disciples was responsible for the iconic Sultan Ahmed Mosque or Blue Mosque (completed in 1616).

Ottoman palaces like the Topkapi (meaning Cannon Gate) which served as the imperial housing and headquarters between the 15th and 16th centuries, and the Dolmabahçe (meaning (Filled-in Garden) which replaced the former in mid-19th century, are also great examples of architectural excellence from the era, although the latter is also an example of the toxic largess that crippled the empire's economy.

Ottoman era art adorns the pages of several manuscripts commissioned by the sultans. The style, as with the architecture, has been adopted from neighboring cultures. Several miniatures, Islamic calligraphic masterpieces, decorative carpets, tiles, and portraits from the era provide a peek into the cultural values and history of the nation. The sultan's name was also written in a stylized fashion, known as the *tughra* which was used to sign imperial documents. Poetry and **music** were also patronized by the Ottoman rulers, many of whom were excellent composers themselves; Suleiman the Magnificent would often write romantic verses for his wife Hurem Sultan (l. c. 1502-1558), under the pen name Muhibbi (meaning lover).

From the 19th century onwards, European-style music was also inculcated in the court, as exemplified the official Ottoman Imperial Anthem, composed under the patronage of Sultan Abdulmejid I (r. 1839-1861). These forms of art and architecture allow modern observers to better understand the things that the Turkish people held close to their hearts, and although European influences can be observed in gradual increments over the centuries, one can still distinguish the elements that made the Ottoman Turks unique.



Great Northern War

https://www.worldhistory.org/Great_Northern_War/

The **Great Northern War** took place from 1700 to 1721 and was fought between Russia and Sweden during the reign of **Peter I of Russia (Peter the Great)**. One of the key causes of the war was Peter the Great's desire to have territory on the Baltic Sea and to gain access to the Black Sea.

Many battles were fought over the 21 years, but Russia finally defeated Sweden at the **Battle** of Poltava in 1709, although a formal peace treaty was not signed until 1721. The renowned French writer **Voltaire** (1694-1778) called it the "Famous War of the North."



Battle of Narva [1700]



Siege of Nottbom by Alexandar Kotzebue



Battle of Poltava 1709 by Louis Caravaque

Aftermath of the Great Northern War

On October 22, 1721, the Holy Synod and the Senate requested that Peter take the title of Russian Emperor and 'Peter the Great.' After some hesitation and lots of thought, Peter finally accepted these titles. In celebration of his great victory, Peter pardoned all prisoners (except for murderers). There were also multiple parties, banquets and masquerade balls, with grand celebrations scheduled to take place in October 1721 and January 1722. The end of the Great Northern War ushered in a new golden age for Russia and proved that Peter was worthy of being Peter 'the Great.'

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Monument to Peter the Great in Kronstadt



Capture of Azov, 1696, by Robert Ker Porter



Abraham Storck: Spectacle on the Amstel river, August 1697



Fleet Manoeuvres Performed on the IJ on 1 September 1797
during Peter's Visit to Amsterdam, painting by Adam Silo (Hermitage)



The frigate *Pieter and Paul* on the IJ while Peter
stands on the small ship on the right. Painting by A. Storck.
This ship sank on his second voyage.



**Portrait of Peter I by Godfrey Kneller, 1698.
This portrait was Peter's gift to the King of England.**



**Woolwich Dockyard in 1698: the recently erected Great Storehouse (centre-right)
dominates the built environment of the dockyard.**



***Peter I of Russia pacifies his marauding troops after
retaking Narva in 1704, by Nikolay Sauerweid, 1859.***



Peter I in the Battle of Poltava, a mosaic by Mikhail Lomonosov



First Winter Palace by Alexey Zubov



Tsar Peter the Great picks up the young King Louis XV (1717), painted around 1838



Peter I being titulated as the Emperor of Russia (1721) by Boris Chorikov



Peter the Great's Assembly in 1718 by Stanisław Chlebowski



The 1782 statue of Peter I in Saint Petersburg, informally known as the Bronze Horseman. Saint Isaac's Cathedral is in the background.



Peter the Great Interrogating the Tsarevich Alexei Petrovich at Peterhof,
a painting by Nikolai Ge (1871)

Foundation of St Petersburg

<https://www.historytoday.com/archive/months-past/foundation-st-petersburg>

The great Russian city was established on May 27th, 1703.

It was no place to build a city, among the islands and mosquito-ridden marshes where the River Neva debouches into the Gulf of Finland. Damp, windy and prone to floods, St Petersburg has a long winter and the Neva can freeze from November to April, when hardy citizens known as 'walruses' break holes in the ice for a dip. Peter the Great's capital was constructed on piles in the marshes, but so many of the labourers who toiled on it died that it was said to be founded on skeletons.

Peter ruthlessly disregarded practical considerations and human life in his determination to create a new capital for himself and a Russian outlet to the West in an area recently seized from the Swedes, where there were already some small settlements. According to legend, the right spot was shown him by an eagle hovering above it. The Tsar cut two strips of turf with a bayonet and arranged them in the shape of a cross, then made a crucifix out of bits of wood and planted it on the turf, announcing that he would build at this place a church to St Peter and St Paul. The more eloquent later version has him talking of cutting a window through to Europe.

The first house was a little log hut put up in three days by soldiers for the Tsar himself and subsequently preserved as Peter's Cabin. He lived there in cramped quarters, sleeping on a cot, while keeping a close eye on the construction of his new city's first main building, the Peter and Paul fortress on an island in the Neva. It was principally a prison and the Tsar had his own son Alexis tortured to death there in 1718. Nearby rose the original wooden cathedral of SS Peter and Paul, where Peter himself was buried when he died in 1725, and almost all the Romanovs after him.

There was also an inn called the Four Frigates and a shipyard where the first Admiralty buildings were erected at what became the centre of the city. As early as 1704 Peter was writing of the place as his capital and insisting that it must be made beautiful with trees and flowers. His New Rome, his 'paradise' as he was soon calling it, was built by forced labour. From 1706 30,000 and from 1707 40,000 peasants were conscripted every year and driven across Russia in gangs for hundreds of miles to the site. They were escorted by armed guards, but so many of them escaped that only half at most actually reached the site. Once there, they died like flies from exhaustion, exposure, starvation and disease, to be replaced by next year's draft.

St Petersburg was intended to wrest the spiritual leadership of Russia away from Moscow and the Tsar employed clerical publicists to puff his new city and identify it with the New Jerusalem of the Book of Revelation. As no one wanted to live in it, however, the New Jerusalem's population had to be conscripted as well as its labour force. Nobles, merchants and craftsmen were ordered to move there with their entire households and pay the cost of building themselves houses. No excuses were

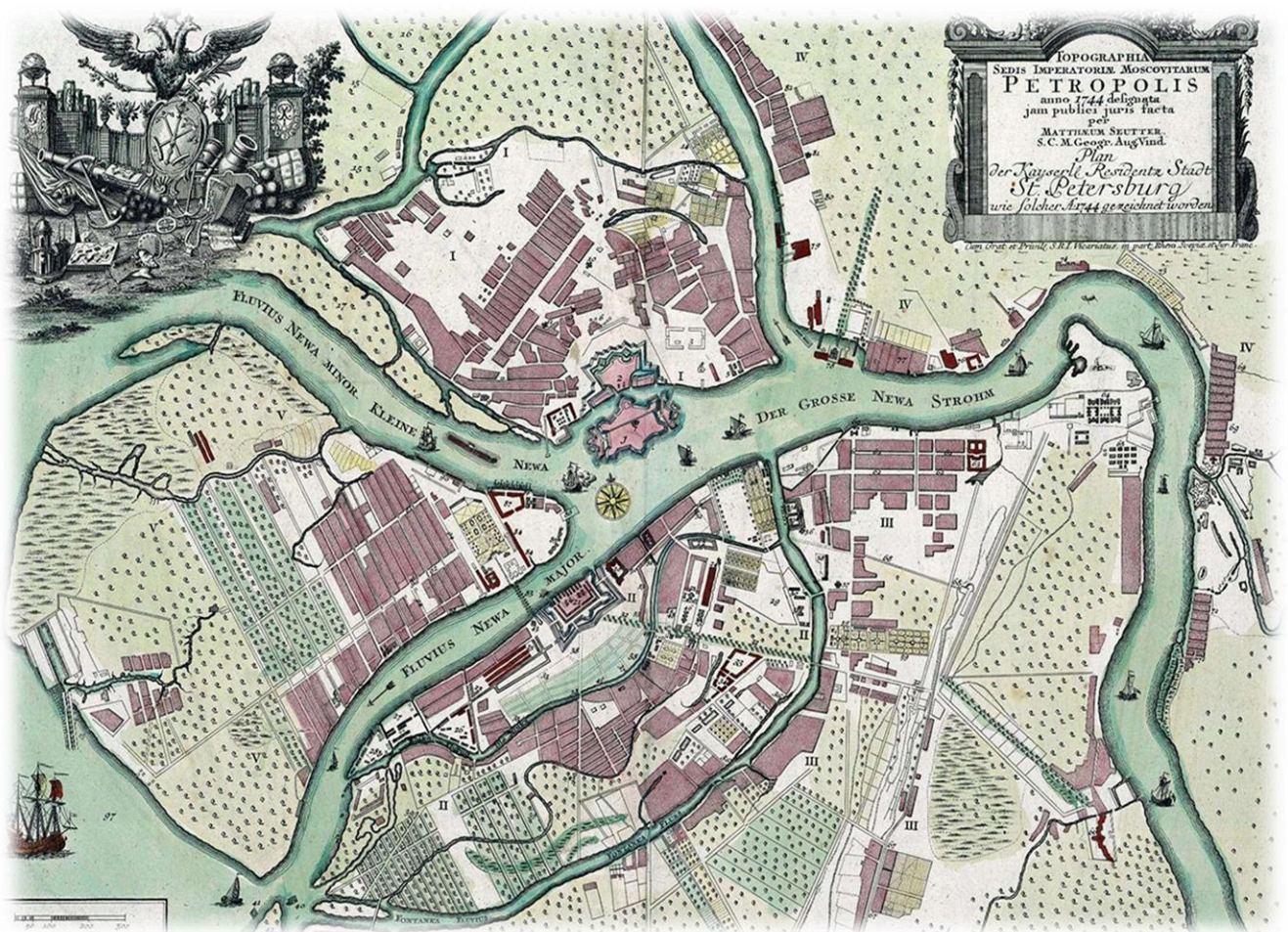
accepted and house sizes and designs by an Italian-Swiss architect, Domenico Trezzini, were strictly prescribed. In the early days prowling wolves ate people who were incautious enough to go outside at night.

Work on the new city gained pace after the decisive Russian victory over the Swedes at Poltava in 1709. The following year a modest summer palace was started for Peter and his second wife, Catherine, a tough peasant girl who stood little nonsense. His huge wind-measuring instrument with its giant dials had a room of its own and there was another for his tools and lathes. Peter imported foreign architects to design his paradise in style with squares, canals and broad, straight boulevards. The Nevsky Prospekt, the longest and most important street, was designed by a Frenchman, Jean-Baptiste Le Blonde, and constructed in 1711 by Swedish prisoners-of-war, who swept it clean every Saturday.

St Petersburg was said to have 50,000 houses in 1714 and it was the first Russian city to have a proper police force. It enjoyed efficient fire-fighting services and street lighting in the best areas and the inhabitants were under orders to plant trees. It was a symbol of the New Russia which Peter had created and under his successors it became one of the most magical cities in Europe.

Map of St Petersburg, 1744

St. Petersburg in the era of Peter the Great (1703-1725)



It is difficult to overestimate the influence of Peter the Great on the founding and formation of St. Petersburg. To begin with, Peter himself chose the site of the new city, laying the foundation stone for the Peter Paul Fortress and the city at its walls in May 1703.

According to one legend, Peter and his associates were boating around the Neva Delta, inspecting various islands. He came ashore on Zaychiy Ostrov (Hare Island), and suddenly noticed an eagle soaring high in the sky above him (the eagle, in double-headed form, is a symbol of the Russian government). This was interpreted as a good omen and the Tsar gave the command to build the fortress at this spot. Accidentally or intentionally, the location of the fortress was also strategically important, blocking the Neva's entrance to enemy fleets.

In the last years of the seventeenth century, Peter the Great had visited Western Europe and begun to dream of building a magnificent city along European lines. However, the earliest structures in the new city were humble in comparison to his grandiose plans. Petersburg is unique in that it has retained its *first residential house*. Only a few days after the official founding of the city, a small wooden cottage, combining elements of both Russian and Dutch architecture, was built for Peter, and has become famous as the Cabin of Peter the Great. The Tsar planned to construct a city of brick and stone, but as there were no brick factories anywhere in the vicinity, the Tsar ordered the cottage to be painted with red with white detailing in imitation of brickwork, as a form of visual instruction and admonition to the new city's inhabitants. The Cabin of Peter the Great still stands on the Petrovskaya Embankment, where within a protective brick pavilion one can view both the cabin and the personal belongings that Peter kept with him during the early days of the city's construction.

Peter the Great founded the Admiralty, which until the beginning of the nineteenth century was in use as a shipyard and where Tsar Peter personally participated in the design and construction of ships for the Baltic Fleet. On the site of the former shipyard now stands a monument to Peter the Great as the "Tsar Carpenter". A clearing was cut through the forest from the Admiralty to the Alexander Nevsky Monastery and a road was laid which later became the city's most important avenue, Nevsky Prospekt. It is thought that Peter himself proposed the idea of the "Nevsky Trident," in which the three main avenues of St. Petersburg (Nevsky Prospekt, Gorokhovaya Ulitsa and Voznesensky Prospekt) all converge on the golden spire of the Admiralty. At the behest of the Tsar, houses in Petersburg were built in the European manner along the "red line" (that is, the curb or sidewalk) without traditional, pre-Petrine gardens fronting the houses. The Tsar ordered that houses be built according to standard architectural designs for the various segments of the population. Kikin Hall on Shpalernaya Ulitsa serves as an example of a typical house for the wealthy. The characteristic architecture of Petrine St. Petersburg can be evaluated based on the following buildings: The Twelve Colleges, the Menshikov Palace, Peter the Great's Summer Palace in the Summer Garden, and the Kunstkammer. On the left bank of the Neva, opposite Peter the Great's Cabin, the Tsar ordered that a park be built with marble statues and fountains. In the park, that was christened the Summer Garden, stands the modest, two-story Summer Palace of Peter the Great. The marble statues were replaced with copies in 2011, and a number of the fountains (destroyed in the flood of 1777) have recently been reinstalled.

Standing on the bank of the tiny Winter Canal that runs between the New Hermitage and the Hermitage Theatre, it is possible to detect a fragment of Peter the Great's Winter Palace, in which the Tsar lived from 1712 and also died. The walls of Peter's original

palace were incorporated into the construction of the Hermitage Theatre, but during the most recent restoration, a fragment of the wall was left exposed to view.

Peter's personality has also left a deep mark on the "necklace" of palatial residences surrounding St. Petersburg. The Tsar founded the magnificent architectural ensemble at Peterhof, whose palaces and fountains were supposed to outshine Versailles. Peter gave his wife an old Swedish manor with hunting grounds, which was later transformed into the luxurious Tsarskoye Selo. On the island of Kotlin, Peter established the naval base of Kronstadt, and the neighboring town of Sestroretsk sprung up around a munitions factory, also founded by Peter the Great.

Peter introduced the tradition of firing the cannon from the walls of the Peter Paul Fortress every day at noon. This tradition was abolished at the end of the eighteenth century, but reintroduced in 1957. We rarely remember that it was Peter the Great who introduced Russia to the German tradition of decorating a Christmas tree for Christmas and the New Year (before Peter, Russians celebrated the new year on 1 September). Therefore, when we see a Christmas tree on Palace Square or in other squares about the city, we should remember the great Tsar Reformer.

There are a large number of monuments commemorating Petersburg's founder, the most famous of which is the equestrian statue created by the French sculptor Etienne Maurice Falconet and nicknamed "The Bronze Horseman." Another equestrian statue in baroque style by Bartolomeo Carlo Rastrelli stands in front of Mikhailovsky Castle. An unusual monument to Peter by Mikhail Shemyakin is located on the territory of the Peter Paul Fortress and reflects not only the Tsar's outward appearance, but also his character traits. On the Admiralty Embankment stands Leopold Bernshtam's statue to the "Tsar Carpenter," which depicts Peter as a young shipbuilder. On the territory of the National Congress Palace in Strelna, there is a modern sculptural group entitled "The Tsar's Walk" which captures Peter together with his wife, Catherine I. There are also monuments to Peter in the Lower Park at Peterhof, on Bolshoi Samsonievsky Prospekt, in front of the Pribaltiskiy Hotel, in the Main Hall of the Moskovsky Railway Station, and at the beginning of Bolsheokhtinsky Prospekt in Okhta.

Every year on 27 May, the date of the founding of St. Petersburg, and on 9 July, Peter the Great's birthday, grateful Petersburgers place flowers on his grave in the Peter Paul Cathedral. While some historians may argue for a reassessment of the benefits of Peter's reforms, and certain Russian nationalists despise him for "betraying" the nation's traditions and customs, in the city that he created he is almost universally admired and cherished. Moreover, while his descendants may have diverged significantly from his initial plans for St. Petersburg, it is Peter's vision, his urbanity and energy, his love of progress, science and craft, that have inspired much of what is best about the city.



Landmarks of Saint Petersburg

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landmarks_of_Saint_Petersburg

The appearance of [Saint Petersburg](#) includes long, straight boulevards, vast spaces, gardens and parks, decorative wrought-iron fences, monuments and decorative sculptures. The Neva River itself, together with its many canals and their granite [embankments](#) and [bridges](#) help to give the city its particular ambience.

Saint Petersburg's position below the [Arctic Circle](#), on the same [latitude](#) as nearby [Helsinki](#), [Stockholm](#), [Aberdeen](#) and [Oslo](#) (60° N), causes twilight to last all night in May, June and July. This phenomenon is known as the "white nights". The white nights are closely linked to another attraction — the eight [drawbridges](#) spanning the Neva. The bridges are drawn from May to late October according to a special schedule, between approximately 2 a.m. and 4:30 a.m. to allow shipping to pass up and down the river. Every night during the navigation period from April to November, 22 bridges across Neva and main canals are drawn to let ships pass in and out of the Baltic Sea.

The [historical center of Saint Petersburg](#) was the first Russian patrimony inscribed on the [UNESCO](#) list of [World Heritage Sites](#).

Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg and Related Groups of Monuments	
UNESCO World Heritage Site	
	
Location	Saint Petersburg, Russia
Criteria	Cultural: (i), (ii), (iv), (vi)
Reference	540bis
Inscription	1990 (14th Session)
Extensions	2013
Area	3,934.1 ha (15.190 sq mi)
Coordinates	 59°57'0"N 30°19'6"E

The **Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg and Related Groups of Monuments** is the name used by [UNESCO](#) when it collectively designated the historic core of the [Russian](#) city of [St. Petersburg](#), as well as buildings and ensembles located in the immediate vicinity as a [World Heritage Site](#) in 1991. The site was recognised for its [architectural heritage](#), fusing [Baroque](#), [Neoclassical](#), and traditional [Russian-Byzantine influences](#).

Sites

The site contains 126 locations including the following objects, ^{[1][2]}

1. Historic Centre of [St. Petersburg](#)
2. Historical Part of the Town of [Kronstadt](#)
3. Fortress of Kronstadt
 - Forts of the [Island Kotlin](#)
 - Redoubts Dena (Fort Den)
 - Fort Shanz
 - Fort Catherine
 - Fort Rift
 - [Fort Constantin](#)
 - Tolbukhin Signal Tower on Tolbukhin Island
 - Forts of the Gulf of Finland
 - Obrutchev Fort
 - Tottleben Fort
 - North Forts Nos. 1-7
 - Paul Fort (Riesbank)
 - Kronshot Fort
 - [Alexander Fort](#) ("Tchumny")
 - Peter Fort
 - South Forts Nos. 1-3
 - Forts of the Coast of the Gulf of Finland
 - Fort Lissy Noss
 - Fort Inno
 - Grey Horse Fort (Seraya Lochad)
 - [Krasnaya Gorka fort](#) (Red Hill)
 - Civil Engineering
 - the Barrier of Cribwork
 - the Barrier of Pile
 - the Barrier of Stone
4. Historical Centre of the Town of Petrokrepost ([Shlisselburg](#))
5. The [Oreshkek Fortress](#) on Orekhovy Island at the source of the Neva
6. Palaces and Park Ensembles of the Town of [Pushkin](#) and its Historical Centre
7. Palaces and Parks of the town of [Pavlovsk](#) and its Historical Centre
8. [Pulkovo Observatory](#)
9. Palace and Park Ensemble of the Village of [Ropsha](#)
10. Palace and Park Ensemble of the Village of [Gostilitsy](#)
11. Palace and Park Ensemble of the Village of [Taytsy](#)
12. Palace and Park Ensemble of the Town of [Gatchina](#) and its Historical Centre
13. Ensemble of the [Coastal Monastery of Saint Sergius](#)
14. Palace and Park Ensemble of the Town of [Strelina](#) and its Historical Centre
15. Palace and Park Ensemble "Mikhailovka"
16. Palace and Park Ensemble "Znamenka"
17. Palace and Park Ensemble of the Town of [Petrodvorets](#) and its Historical Centre
18. Palace and Park Ensemble "Sobstvennaya Datcha"
19. Palace and Park Ensemble "Sergeevka"
20. Palace and Park Ensembles of the Town of [Lomonosov](#) and its Historical Centre

- Historical Centre of the Town of Lomonosov ([Oranienbaum](#)), including the Palace and Park Ensemble of the Upper Park and Lower Garden
 - Mordvinov's Estate
 - Maximov's Datcha
 - Zubov's Estate "Otrada"
 - Ratkov-Rozhnov's Estate "Dubki"
 - S. K. Grieg's Estate "Sans Ennui"
 - Datcha of the Hospital
21. Scientific Town-Institution of Physiologist [I. P. Pavlov](#)
22. Zinoviev's Estate
23. [Shuvalov's Estate](#)
24. Viazemsky's Estate
25. Sestroretsky Razliv
26. [I. Repin Estate "The Penates"](#)
27. Cemetery of the Village of [Komarovo](#)
28. Lindulovskaya Rotsha
29. [River Neva](#) with Banks and Embankments
30. Izhorsky Bench (Glint)
31. Dudergofs Heights
32. Koltushi Elevation
33. Yukkovskaya Elevation
34. The Roads
- Moskovskoye Highway
 - Kievskoye Highway
 - Railway Leningrad-Pavlovsk
 - the Highway Pushkin-Gatchina
 - Volkhovskoe Highway
 - [Tallinskoye Highway](#)
 - [Peterhofskoye Highway](#)
 - [Ropshinskoye Highway](#)
 - [Gostilitskoye Highway](#)
 - [Primorskoye Highway](#)
 - [Vyborgskoye Highway](#)
 - [Koltushskoye Highway](#)
35. Canals
- [Ligovsky Canal](#)
 - the Maritime Channel
 - Petrovsky canal
 - Kronstadsky canal
 - Zelenogorsky canal
36. The [Green Belt of Glory](#)
- the Blockade Ring
 - the Road of Life
 - Oranienbaumsky Spring-Board

The city of Saint Petersburg was founded by Tsar Peter the Great on 27 May 1703. It became the capital of the Russian Empire and remained as such for more than two hundred years (1712–1728, 1732–1918). Saint Petersburg ceased being the capital in 1918 after the October Coup

Monument to Catherine the Great



This monument to Catherine the Great was unveiled in 1873. The Empress was adored by the people of St. Petersburg for all her efforts to improve the life and education provided by the city and her reign has long been known as the "golden age" of Russia. The statue of Catherine is surrounded by delicately carved figures of the most prominent individuals of her reign: politicians and poets, military men and courtiers. The monument is located in the middle of a small, grass-covered square, just off Nevsky Prospekt, which is lined by the Anichkov Palace, the Alexandrinsky Drama Theater and the Russian National Library. As one of the country's most enlightened monarchs, Catherine could not have chosen a better spot herself.

The Bronze Horseman



Bronze Horseman on Senatskaya Ploshchad is the most famous monument to Peter the Great in St Petersburg, the city that he founded and named. Built in the 18th century, by the beginning of the 19th century the Bronze Horseman was notoriously mentioned in the works of poets and writers of that time. Contrary to its name, the monument is made of copper. The sculpture was commissioned by Catherine II, and according to her plans Peter had to appear as a Roman emperor and a winner with a rod and sceptre in his hand. However, the French sculptor Etienne Falconet, who was invited to work on the monument, dared to argue with the crowned head and showed the world another Peter, without compromising his strategic talents as a wise ruler.

Monument to Peter the Great



In the 20th century a new square was developed on the site where Dance Square was previously situated. In 1991, a new memorial was erected on this square in the name of the city's founder Peter the Great. The memorial was created by Leningrad artist Mikhail Shemyakin and donated to the city.

The Alexander Column



The Alexander Column was erected on Dvortsovaya Ploschad in 1834 by the architect Auguste Montferrand. With a height of 47.5 meters, it signified the victory of the Russian army over Napoleon and France in 1812. The Alexander Column is the tallest column in the world, and is made of a solid stone. It was named after both the Emperor Alexander I, who defeated Napoleon, and the Pharos lighthouse in the Egyptian city of Alexandria, which was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world and embodies the ultimate level of human achievement. The Alexander Column is made of red granite processed in St Petersburg, and weighs 600 tons. It is not dug firmly into the ground, but is held on its weight solely by exact calculations.

Monument to Nicholas I



The monument to the iron-willed and notoriously despotic Russian ruler Nicholas I on St. Isaac's Square was built by renowned Russian architect Auguste de Montferrand between 1856 and 1859. Montferrand also built the neighboring St. Isaac's Cathedral. The monument to Nicholas I accurately and powerfully depicts the determined absolutist Russian ruler as a powerful military figure.

Monument to Alexander Pushkin on Ploshchad Iskusstv (Arts Square)



There are several statues of Russia's greatest poet, Alexander Pushkin, in St. Petersburg but the finest of them is probably that which stands in front of the State Russian Museum on Ploshchad Iskusstv. The monument was created by sculptor Mikhail Anikushin and erected in 1957 to mark the 250th anniversary of the founding of St. Petersburg (the city was, of course, founded in 1703 but the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953 delayed celebrations by a full four years).

Statues of Mikhail Kutuzov and Barclay de Tolley



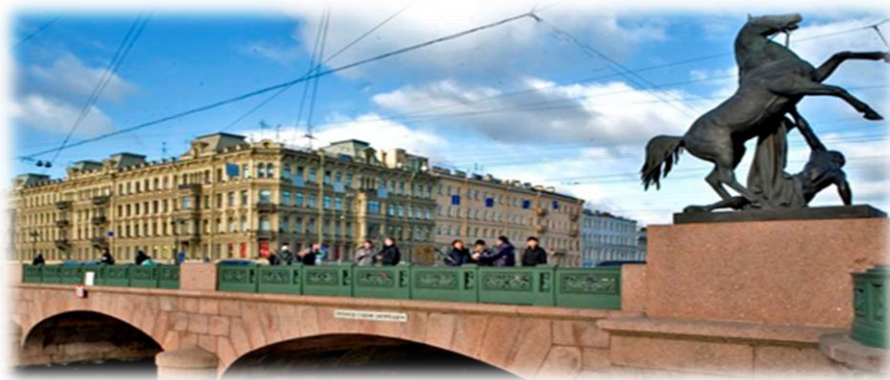
Both Kutuzov and Barclay de Tolley are depicted in their statues in the cannon of Roman Classicism which was fashionable at the time. The sculptor, Boris Orlovsky, dressed both men in togas on top of their military uniforms. Kutuzov is one of the most famous figures in Russia's military history, known above all for his victory over Napoleon at the gates of Moscow in 1812. Barclay de Tolley's role in the victory - it was he who advocated the policy of retreating, adopting scorched-earth tactics and inviting the enemy into the depths of Russia - was not acknowledged at first. When the enemy advanced too far for Emperor Alexander I, he replaced de Tolley with Kutuzov, who followed the plans of his predecessor - and won the war.

Rostral Columns



These two columns standing on the Strelka ("spit") of Vasilyevsky Island are as much a symbol of St. Petersburg as the open arches of Palace Bridge, the dome of St. Isaac's Cathedral, or the spires of the Admiralty and the Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral. For over two centuries, they have formed an integral part of the city's central panorama over the River Neva, and are particularly impressive on major public holidays, when torches are lit on top of them.

The Horse Tamers



Decorating the Anichkov Bridge, which carries Nevsky Prospekt across the Fontanka River in the very centre of St. Petersburg, the four statues that comprise the sculptural group The Horse Tamers are one of the most strikingly beautiful and immediately recognizable monuments in all of St. Petersburg. Their sculptor, Baron Peter Clodt von Jurgensburg, a former artillery officer of Baltic German descent, had a particular affinity for animals, especially horses, which made him a favourite with Emperor Nicholas I. In the 1830s, he prepared two statues - Horse with Walking Youth and Youth Taking a Horse by the Bridle - for the quay in front of the Academy of Fine Arts. However, that site was chosen for the Ancient Egyptian Sphinxes brought to St. Petersburg in 1834, and Clodt proposed mounting his statues on the western end of Anichkov Bridge.

The Narva Gate



The Narva Triumphal Arch was erected as a memorial to the war of 1812. A wooden triumphal arch designed according to the plan of famous Italian classical architect Dzhakomo Quarenghi. Quarenghi also built the Concert Hall pavilion (1782-88), Alexander Palace in Pushkin (1792-1800) and the Smolny Institute (1806-08) in St. Petersburg. The Narva Triumphal Arch was specially constructed on the Narva highway to greet the soldiers who were returning from abroad after their victory over Napoleon. The arch was located approximately halfway between Ploshchad Stachek and Obvodny Canal.

Sphinxes on Universitetskaya Embankment



St Petersburg is heavily decorated with many sculptures of various animals, birds and mythological creatures. There are 14 sphinxes in Petersburg, but the most noteworthy sphinxes are located on the Universitetskaya Embankment, opposite the entrance of the Academy of Arts. Only these sculptures were imported directly from Egypt. Scientists believe that their age is approximately 3.5 thousand years. The Russian traveller and diplomat Muravyov saw one of the sphinxes in Alexandria, and was so impressed by what he saw that he appealed to the Russian ambassador and expressed the need to purchase these sculptures for Russia. In the end, his appeal went to Nicholas I, who decided to purchase these unusual sculptures.

Chizhik-Pyzhik



The monument of Chizhik-Pyzhik is an extremely popular monument among tourists of all ages. It was installed on the Fontanka Embankment near the water. Local residents immediately fell in love with the little hero, and soon the belief emerged that if you throw small coins onto a small platform near the bird's legs their wish will come true. Chizhik-Pyzhik is the smallest monument in St. Petersburg: with a height of only 11 centimeters and a weight of five kilograms. Due to its small size, the little monument has been stolen more than seven times.

The Hare Escaping Flooding



If you look to your left as you cross Ioannovsky Bridge to the Peter and Paul Fortress, you will see below you on one of the wooden piles in the water a small rather frightened-looking metal hare. This unusual sculpture commemorates the hares that used to live in large numbers on Zaychiy Ostrov ("Hare Island"), the island on which the Peter and Paul Fortress stands. Legend has it that one hare, caught by the rising waters during a flood, saved itself by jumping into Peter the Great's boot as he disembarked from a boat onto the island. This idiosyncratic memorial to the floods that plagued St. Petersburg through the 18th and 19th centuries was erected in 2003 during renovation of Ioannovsky Bridge. The heights of major floods in the history of St. Petersburg are marked on the post beneath the hare.

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Kindly visit these Web Links for MORE Monuments:

- 01] https://bienvenidospb.com/en_most-important-visit-monument.html
- 02] <http://www.saint-petersburg.com/monuments/>
- 03] <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/540/>
- 04] https://www.tripadvisor.in/Attractions-g298507-Activities-c47-t26-St_Petersburg_Northwestern_District.html
- 05] <https://www.introducingsaintpetersburg.com/monuments-attractions>
- 06] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Saint_Petersburg#:~:text=The%20city%20of%20Saint%20Petersburg,1918%20after%20the%20October%20Coup.

TIMELINE

Peter the Great

[https://www.worldhistory.org/timeline/Peter the Great/](https://www.worldhistory.org/timeline/Peter%20the%20Great/)

Peter I of Russia (Peter the Great) was the Tsar of Russia from 1682-1721 and Emperor of Russia from 1721-1725.

During his long reign, Peter had absolute power and brought real change to Russia, including building its first navy, introducing industrialisation, establishing educational institutions and creating the new Russian capital, St. Petersburg.

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- 30 May 1672 - 28 Jan 1725

Life of **Peter the Great**.

- 1676

Tsar Alexis dies and Feodor becomes tsar.

- 1682

Tsar Feodor dies.

- May 1682

The Streltsy Revolt.

- 6 Jul 1682

The joint coronation of **Peter the Great** and **Tsar** Ivan.

- Jun 1688

Peter the Great sees an English boat which starts his dream of building his own navy.

- 1689

Sophia's regency ends.

- 27 Jan 1689

Peter the Great marries Eudoxia Lopukhina.

- 1695

The First Azov Campaign takes place.

- **1696**

The Second Azov Campaign takes place.

- **1696**

Tsar Ivan dies leaving Peter the sole ruler of Russia.

- **1697 - 1698**

The **Grand Embassy of Peter the Great** across Western **Europe**.

- **9 Mar 1697**

The Grand Embassy departs Moscow.

- **7 Aug 1697**

Peter and the Grand Embassy arrive in Holland (Amsterdam).

- **7 Jan 1698**

Peter leaves Holland and travels to **England**.

- **11 Jan 1698**

Peter arrives in London, **England**.

- **23 Jan 1698**

Peter pays a formal visit to King **William III of England** at Kensington **Palace**.

- **3 Mar 1698**

William III of England gifts Peter a royal yacht.

- **18 Apr 1698**

Peter meets with King William III for the last time.

- **2 May 1698**

Peter leaves **England** and returns to Holland.

- **15 May 1698**

The Grand Embassy leaves Holland and travels to Vienna, Austria.

- **19 Jul 1698**

Peter leaves Vienna and travels to Poland.

- **4 Sep 1698**

The Grand Embassy arrives back in Moscow, Russia.

- **1699**

The Treaty of Carlowitz is signed with the **Ottoman Empire**.

- **1700 - 1721**

The **Great Northern War** between Russia and Sweden.

- **1701**

The Monastery Office is formed.

- **1702**

Peter the Great welcomes foreigners to Russia.

- **1703**

Construction of St. Petersburg begins at the River Neva.

- **1703**

The first Russian newspaper is published.

- **1704**

Grand Duchess Sophia, the former regent of Russia, dies.

- **1707**

Peter the Great secretly marries Marta Skavronskaya (Catherine I of Russia).

- **1707**

The first hospital is built in Moscow.

- **1707**

The Russian **alphabet** is reformed.

- **1708**

Peter the Great splits Russia into eight provincial governorates.

- **1711**

The Russian Senate is created.

- **1712**

Peter the Great and Marta Skavronskaya (Catherine I of Russia) marry for the second time - this time publicly.

- **1712**

St. Petersburg becomes the new capital **city** of Russia.

- **1714**

Peter the Great orders that mathematics teachers teach the children of the landowners.

- **1715**

Peter the Great creates the Inspector General of Decrees to oversee the Senate.

- **1715**

Peter the Great decrees that all towns would have hospitals.

- **1718**

Feofan Prokopovich is made the Chief Ecclesiastical Advisor of the Russian Orthodox Church.

- **1718**

Peter the Great establishes nine colleges.

- **1720**

Peter the Great orders the Senate to establish the General Master of Petitions.

- **1721**

The Spiritual Regulation is established in Russia.

- **1722**

The Table of Ranks is introduced in Russia.

- **1725**

Marta Skavronskaya becomes empress of Russia as Catherine I of Russia.

- **28 Jan 1725**

Peter the Great dies.

Also visit these Web Links:

01] <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17840446>

02] <https://www.havefunwithhistory.com/peter-the-great-timeline/>

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Films & Videos

[01] Peter the Great (Film)

Peter the Great



Official movie poster

Directed by	Vladimir Petrov
Written by	Vladimir Petrov Aleksey Tolstoy Nikolay Leshchenko
Starring	Nikolay Simonov Nikolai Cherkasov Alla Tarasova Mikhail Zharov Viktor Dobrovolsky
Cinematography	Vyacheslav Gordanov Vladimir Yakovlev
Edited by	N. Kerstens
Music by	Vladimir Shcherbachov
Production company	Lenfilm
Release dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1937 (Part 1)• 1938 (Part 2)
Running time	96 min./96 min.
Country	Soviet Union
Language	Russian

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_the_Great_\(1937_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_the_Great_(1937_film))

Peter the Great (Russian: Пётр Первый, romanized: *Pyotr pervyy*) is a 1937-1938 Soviet two-part historical biographical film, shot on the Order of Lenin from Leningrad film studio Lenfilm director Vladimir Petrov on the eponymous play by Aleksey Nikolayevich Tolstoy's devoted to the life and activity of the Russian Emperor Peter I.

Cast

- Nikolai Simonov as Tsar Pyotr I
- Mikhail Zharov as Alexander Danilovich Menshikov
- Nikolay Cherkasov as Prince Alexei
- Mikhail Tarkhanov as Field Marshal Boris Sheremetev
- Viktor Dobrovolsky as Yaguzhinsky, an officer / Fedka, a debtor
- Alla Tarasova as Catherine, a peasant girl
- Konstantin Gibshman as Buinosov, the boyar
- Nikolai Orlov as Yemov
- Fyodor Bogdanov as Foundry Owner
- Vladimir Gardin as Pyotr Andreyevich Tolstoy

Awards

- Prize at an exhibition in Paris (1937)
- **Stalin Prize** (1941) I Class – Mikhail Zharov, Vladimir Petrov, Nikolay Simonov

[02] Peter the Great - Russia's Greatest Tsar Documentary

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e85CTYDQY4I> [41:18]

[03] Peter the Great

TV Mini Series - 1986 [6:11:00]

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0090502/>

[04] The Youth of Peter the Great (1980) movie : The Best Documentary Ever

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZfOL2mGy4gQ> [2:31:04]

[05] Featured Event Videos {Library of Congress}

- a) A History of Russian Architecture
- b) Schools that Peter the Great Built

<https://guides.loc.gov/peter-the-great/films>



Peter completely reformed the Russian army along western lines.
This depiction shows an infantryman from 1704 installing a plug bayonet.



Peter I at Krasnaya Gorka Lighting a Fire on the Shore to Signal to his Sinking Ships;
the Russian Baltic Fleet first went to sea in full force, –
to help the Russian troops besieging Viborg, –
the fleet got caught in a storm. Painting by Ivan Aivazovsky (1846).



Tomb of Peter the Great in the Peter and Paul Fortress, St Petersburg

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